1. Nationalism as a Problem in the History of Political Ideas

> To trouble oneself with the task of dealing with something that has been adequately dealt with before is superfluous, a result of ignorance, or a sign of evil intent.
> Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Bajjah [Avempace], *Tadblr al-mutawahfyid*

I

In one of his less celebrated articles, John Plamenatz has talked about 'two types' of nationalism:' in both, nationalism is 'primarily a cultural phenomenon' although it often takes a 'political form'. One type is 'western', having emerged primarily in Western Europe, and the other 'eastern', to be found in Eastern Europe, in Asia and Africa, and also in Latin America. Both types depend upon the acceptance of a common set of standards by which the state of development of a particular national culture is measured. In the first type, however, although there is the feeling that the nation is at a disadvantage with respect to others, it is nevertheless already 'culturally equipped' to make the attempt to remove those deficiencies. Thus, although the new global standard of progress may have been set for the rest of the world by France or Britain, they were based upon a set of ideas 'about man, morals and society' which, in their social and intellectual origins, were West European generally. Britain and France may have been the cultural, economic and political pace makers, and may have been envied or admired for this reason, but simultaneous with the process of their emergence as world leaders, there had emerged a 'comity of nations' in Western Europe 'which had already learned to think of itself as ahead of all the others'. Consequently, when nationalism emerged in the other countries of the West, despite the fact that it was the product of a sense of disadvantage with respect to the standards of progress set by the pace makers, there was no feeling that the nation was not culturally equipped to make the effort to reach those standards. Germans or Italians, for instance, already had the necessary linguistic, educational and professional skills that were deemed necessary for a 'consciously progressive civilisation'. They had therefore 'little need to equip themselves culturally by appropriating what was alien to them'. That is to say, although the acceptance of a universal standard of progress had produced an

awareness of disadvantage, that universal standard itself was not seen in any fundamental way as being alien to the national culture.

'Eastern' nationalism, on the other hand, has appeared among 'peoples recently drawn into a civilisation hitherto alien to them, and whose ancestral cultures are not adapted to success and excellence by these cosmopolitan and increasingly dominant standards'. They too have measured the backwardness of their nations in terms of certain global standards set by the advanced nations of Western Europe. But what is distinctive here is that there is also a fundamental awareness that those standards have come from an alien culture, and that the inherited culture of the nation did not provide the necessary adaptive leverage to enable it to reach those standards of progress. The 'Eastern' *type* of nationalism, consequently, has been accompanied by an effort to 're-equip' the nation culturally, to transform it. But it could not do so simply by imitating the alien culture, for then the nation would lose its distinctive identity. The search therefore was for a regeneration of the national culture, adapted to the requirements of progress, but retaining at the same time its distinctiveness.

The attempt is deeply contradictory: 'It is both imitative and hostile to the models it imitates ...' It is imitative in that it accepts the value of the standards set by the alien culture. But it also involves a rejection: 'in fact, two rejections, both of them ambivalent: rejection of the alien intruder and dominator who is nevertheless to be imitated and surpassed by his own standards, and rejection of ancestral ways which are seen as obstacles to progress and yet also cherished as marks of identity'. This contradictory process is therefore deeply disturbing as well. 'Eastern nationalism is disturbed and ambivalent as the nationalisms of Herder and Mazzini were not.'

Unlike much of his other work, this article by Plamenatz is neither rigorously argued nor particularly profound. But in making the distinction between the two types of nationalism, it states with sufficient clarity the premises of what may be called the liberal-rationalist dilemma in talking about nationalist thought. The same dilemma can be seen in the standard liberal histories of nationalism, most notably in the work of Hans Kohn.[2] This historiography accepts nationalism as an integral part of the story of liberty. Its origin is coeval with the birth of universal history, and its development is part of the same historical process which saw the rise of industrialism and democracy. In its essential aspects, therefore, nationalism represents the attempt to actualize in political terms the universal urge for liberty and progress. And *yet the* evidence was undeniable that it could also give rise to mindless chauvinism and xenophobia and serve as the justification for organized violence and tyranny. Seen as part of the story of liberty, nationalism could be defined as a rational ideological framework for the realization of rational, and highly laudable, political ends. But that was not how nationalism had made its presence felt in much of recent history. It has been the cause of the most destructive wars ever seen; it has justified the brutality of Nazism and Fascism; it has become the ideology of racial hatred in the colonies and has given birth to some of the most irrational revivalist movements as well as to the most oppressive political regimes in the contemporary world. The

evidence was indeed overwhelming that nationalism and liberty could often be quite irreconcilably opposed.

The distinction between the two types of nationalism is an attempt to come to terms with this liberal dilemma. Indeed, Kohn also made a distinction of this sort, between 'western' and 'non-western' nationalisms,[3] and later between 'good' nationalism and 'evil' nationalism.[4] The distinction is designed to explain how a profoundly liberal idea could be so distorted as to produce such grossly illiberal movements and regimes. It does this by constructing a dichotomy, between a normal and a special type. The normal is the classical, the orthodox, the pure type. This type of nationalism shares the same material and intellectual premises with the European Enlightenment, with industry and the idea of progress, and with modern democracy. Together they constitute a historical unity, defined with a fair degree of clarity in both geographical and chronological terms. This gives the liberal-rationalist his paradigmatic form in which nationalism goes hand-in-hand with reason, liberty and progress. The special type emerges under somewhat different historical circumstances. It is, therefore, complex, impure, often deviant; it represents a very difficult and contradictory historical process which can be very 'disturbing'. There is nothing in it, the liberal-rationalist would argue, that is necessarily illiberal. But being a special type, operating in unfavourable circumstances, it can often be so. 'No doubt,' says Plamenatz, 'nationalists have quite often not been liberals, but this, I suggest, is largely because they have so often been active in conditions unpropitious to freedom, as the liberal understands it. I see no logical repugnance between nationalism and liberalism.' Indeed, the very fact that nationalists of the 'eastern' type accept and value the ideal of progress — and strive to transform their inherited cultures in order to make them better suited for the conditions of the modern world — means that archaic forms of authority are destroyed, conditions are created for the growth of a certain degree of individual initiative and choice, and for the introduction of science and modern education. All this cannot but be liberating in a fundamental historical sense. Consequently, even when this kind of nationalism appears in the form of revivalist movements or oppressive regimes, it still represents an urge for progress and freedom.

> We must see this nationalism as part of a social, intellectual and moral revolution of which the aspirations to democracy and personal freedom are also products. It is connected with these aspirations, and even serves to strengthen them and to create some of the social conditions of their realisation, even though *it* so often also perverts them.

Thus the liberal-rationalist saves the purity of his paradigm by designating as deviant all those cases which do not fit the classical form. Even in these deviant cases, he would argue, one can still discern the basic historical urge to attain the classical ideals. The deviations themselves are to be explained by the special circumstances in which this attempt has to be made in countries where conditions are 'unpropitious to freedom'. That is to say, the deviations are to be explained *sociologically*, by grouping and classifying the various empirical

cases and then constructing coherent sets of sociological conditions which may be said to be the cause for each particular type of deviation.[5]

The argument could then start, to take one example,[6] by recognizing first of all the world-wide sweep of 'the tidal wave of modernisation', but distilling its essence in the awareness of man's 'capacity to contribute to, and to profit from, industrial society'. It would then proceed to describe the erosion of the 'structure' of traditional society, conceived as a system of role relationships, and its replacement by the 'culture' of industrial society, in which the classification of people by culture is the classification by nationality. The argument would then take in the fact of the notorious 'unevenness' of the process of industrialization, in terms of geographical and cultural regions. Not only does industrialization disrupt traditional society, it disrupts it unevenly. But now there is also a common standard by which the states of advancement of different regions can be compared. The perception of uneven development creates the possibility for nationalism; it is born when the more and the less advanced populations can be easily distinguished in cultural terms. 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist — but it does need some pre-existing differentiating marks to work on . . .' The two crucial social groups which carry the struggle forward are the proletariat and the intelligentsia. The intellectuals 'will exchange second-class citizenship for a first-class citizenship plus greater privileges based on rarity'. The proletarians will exchange 'hardships-with-snubs for possibly greater hardships with national identification'. The dilemma of a choice between imitation and identity? 'Superficially', the intellectuals

> always face the crucial dilemma of choosing between 'westernising' and a *narodnik* tendency... But the dilemma is quite spurious: ultimately the movements invariably contain both elements, a genuine modernism and a more or less spurious concern for local culture ... By the twentieth century, the dilemma hardly bothers anyone: the philosopher-kings of the 'underdeveloped' world all act as westernisers, and all talk like *narodniks.*

Thus the liberal dilemma is circumvented by a positive sociology. The urge for modernization is a positive fact of contemporary history. If the struggles in the backward parts of the world 'to lift onself by one's own shoelaces, economically', mean a certain repressive attitude, that too is a sociological fact, to be understood and explained. But it is on the whole a good thing that these struggles are being conducted within a framework of nationalism. There are, first of all, the 'psychological blessings' of dignity and self-respect, of the elimination of inferior grades of citizenship. There is also the fortunate consequence that these political convulsions 'do not need to be re-imported into the developed, previously imperial, territories'. They can be fought out at a distance, with a certain degree of autonomy. If the liberal conscience of the West adopts the right moral attitude of sympathy and non-interference, these backward nations will find their own chosen paths to independence, freedom and progress.

An elaboration of this sociological understanding of the phenomenon of

nationalism would then inevitably proceed towards a teleology, i.e. a theory of political development. And once this step is taken, the empirical relation between nationalism and illiberal regimes can even be justified by a theory of the stages of development. Thus, it could be argued that given the very special sociological circumstances in which the new nations have to struggle to modernize themselves, it might be a perfectly rational strategy for them, in a sense, to postpone the democratic consummation of their efforts until the economic structures of their society are sufficiently industrialized and their social institutions modernized.[7] An empiricist sociology can do wonderful things to resolve the moral dilemmas of a liberal conscience.

Indeed, armed with his sociological explanation of the 'conditions' which give rise to nationalist movements, the liberal theorist can even assert that nationalism poses only a very trivial problem for the history of political ideas. 'It is not so much,' runs the self-complacent judgment of Ernest Gellner,

> that the prophets of nationalism were not anywhere near the First Division, when it came to the business of thinking ... It is rather that these thinkers did not really make much difference. If one of them had fallen, others would have stepped into his place .. . The quality of nationalist thought would hardly have been affected much by such substitutions. Their precise doctrines are hardly worth analysing.[8]

Why? Because given the 'conditions' in which nationalism made its appearance, there was little scope for genuine doctrinal innovation or philosophical defence. Or more precisely, the necessary philosophizing had already been done, in a different context — that of the rise of'industrialism'. (Gellner quaintly refers to Hume and Kant as the ones who 'explored, with unparalleled philosophical depth ... the general logic of the new spirit...'') By the time nationalism came on the scene, mankind was 'irreversibly committed to industrial society, and therefore to a society whose productive system is based on cumulative science and technology'. This commitment necessarily meant coming to terms with the requirements of industrial society, namely a cultural homogeneity and its convergence with a political unit. Cultural homogeneity was an essential concomitant of industrial society, 'and we had better make our peace with it. It is not the case ... that nationalism imposes homogeneity; it is rather that a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism.'[10]

Thus nationalist thought did not even need to investigate 'the general logic' of the kind of society it was trying to build: that logic was given to it objectively. It did, *of course,* have *to* confront the problem *of* selecting *from* pre-existing cultures in agrarian society some of the distinctive elements of this new homogeneous national culture. Nationalism 'uses some of the pre-existent cultures, generally transforming them in the process, but it cannot possibly use them all'.'' It often defines itself in the name of some putative folk culture. But this is a myth, a piece of self-deception; that is not what it really does. In reality,

> nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, whose previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some

> cases of the totality, of the population. It means that generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. That is what *really* happens.[12]

What if the new high culture happens to be the product of an alien imposition? Can it then effectively supersede the various folk cultures and become a truly homogeneous national culture? Is there not a problem of incommensurability and inter-cultural relativism which the new national culture must overcome? Gellner recognizes that there is a problem here, but it is not one which he thinks needs to be taken seriously. The fact is that with the universal acceptance of the imperative of industrialism, every national culture does manage to overcome incommensurability and relativism.

> The question concerning just *how* we manage to transcend relativism is interesting and difficult, and certainly will not be solved here. What is relevant, however, is that we somehow or other do manage to overcome it, that we are not hopelessly imprisoned within a set of cultural cocoons and their norms, and that for some very obvious reasons (shared cognitive and productive bases and greatly increased inter-social communication) we may expect fully industrial man to be even less enslaved to his local culture than was his agrarian predecessor.'[13]

Nationalist thought, in other words, does not pose any special problems for either epistemology or political philosophy. All its problems can be reduced to the sociological requirements of industrial society whose universal sway provides the context for the understanding of nationalism.

It is by a recourse to sociology, in fact, that the liberal-rationalist can first identify in positive terms, and then 'sympathetically' understand, the difficult conditions under which the poor and oppressed nations of the world have to strive in order to attain those universal values of reason, liberty and progress which the latter have, at last, learnt to cherish. There is unfortunately a great historical lag which they must make up. The knowledge of backwardness is never very comforting. It is even more disturbing when its removal means a coming to terms with a culture that is alien. But that is the historical destiny of the backward nations. There can be no merit, as Plamenatz gently chides 'Western critics of nationalism', in expressing distaste for the failings of these backward peoples. 'In a world in which the strong and rich people have dominated and exploited the poor and the weak peoples, and in which autonomy is held to be a mark of dignity, of adequacy, of the capacity to live as befits human beings, in such a world this kind of nationalism is the inevitable reaction of the poor and the weak.'[14]

II

'Guilt!' an unrepentant critic of nationalism like Elie Kedourie will say: '... guilt, indignation, and moral passion';'... powerful and corrosive feelings of guilt'.[15] This merciless self-accusation has been propagated in recent years by European publicists, and their audience, always so keen to be fair and considerate to the underdogs, have accepted the charge without protest. The very idea of nationalism being a rational and self-conscious attempt by the weak and poor peoples of the world to achieve autonomy and liberty is demonstrably false. Nationalism as an ideology is irrational, narrow, hateful and destructive. It is not an authentic product of any of the non-European civilizations which, in each particular case, it claims as its classical heritage. It is wholly a European export to the rest of the world. It is also one of Europe's most pernicious exports, for it is not a child of reason or liberty, but of their opposite: of fervent romanticism, of political messianism whose inevitable consequence is the annihilation of freedom.

Kedourie's is a severe indictment of nationalism, and one against which liberal defenders of the doctrine have been hard put to it to state their case. Of course, Kedourie's own brand of conservative politics, the ground from which he has launched his powerful attack, could easily be dismissed as archaic and irrelevant. For instance he states his belief in the essential fairness and nobility of the true principles of empire. He believes that those who rule and those who are ruled are 'different species of men' and that it is most conducive for political order when those distinctions are clearly maintained. He believes in a style of politics in which emotions and passions are kept to a minimum, where interests are not given the illusory form of moral principles, where governance is not compromised by the fickle determinations of a plebiscite. These ideas may seem quaint or bizarre, depending on one's particular taste for such old-world wisdoms. But they can be dismissed quite easily.

Why, then, the continuing debate with Kedourie, and the hesitant, almost timid, defence of the liberal's case? Anthony Smith, for instance, objects that Kedourie's description of the consequences of nationalism is a one-sided misrepresentation.[16] It overlooks 'the advantages and blessings of nationalist revivals': Dvořák and Chopin, for example, or Césaire, Senghor, 'Abduh and Tagore. Nationalism has often had a great humanizing and civilizing influence. Besides, it is misleading to portray nationalist politics merely as secret conspiracy and terrorism or nihilism and totalitarianism.

> Nobody would dispute that these have been features of some nationalisms ... But it is only fair to recall the extreme situations in which they operated ... Kedourie forgets the uses of nationalism in developing countries, the way in which they can legitimate new regimes desirous of maintaining political stability and keeping a fissiparous population under a single and viable harness. He forgets too the examples of nationalism providing an impetus to constitutional reforms, as in India or Ottoman Turkey, not to mention its uses in legitimising sweeping social change and modernisation ...

This, of course, is a rather feeble rejoinder, conceding at the very start a great deal of empirical ground: 'Nobody would dispute that these have been features *of some* nationalisms …', but *not of all.* Smith then goes on to construct a defensible case by stating a 'core doctrine of nationalism', itself 'incomplete' and 'unstable', but capable of being rounded out by 'specific' theories that can encompass particular sets of empirical cases of movements conventionally called nationalist. The core doctrine 'fuses three ideals: collective self-determination of the people, the expression of national character and individuality, and finally the vertical division of the world into unique nations each contributing its special genius to the common fund of humanity'.[11] As such, this doctrine can be regarded 'as a not unreasonable application of Enlightenment principles to the complexities of modern politics and societies … it constitutes a necessary condition for the search for realistic conditions of liberty and equality, not to mention democracy, in an already divided world':[18] About the 'specific' theories which are additionally necessary to encompass the many particular cases of nationalist movements, Smith's submission is that they are the products of very specific historical circumstances and are therefore 'morally highly variegated', and it would be wrong to make 'a *simpliste* ascription of all these concrete manifestations to the *unmediated* effects of "nationalism" '.

The problem of the 'specific', or rather the 'deviant', cases is thus consigned to the domain of the historically contingent, to be explained by a suitable sociological theory, and therefore not requiring a moral defence. The core doctrine, however, does assert a moral claim, made up of three separate but related parts: self-determination, expression of national character, and each nation contributing its special genius to the common fund of humanity. This is how the often contentious claim to national autonomy is reconciled with the ideal of universal liberty and fraternity. But in specifying this application of Enlightenment principles to the conditions of modern politics, the liberal defender of nationalism must invariably play straight into Kedourie's hand. For this specification will have to be in terms of the idea of progress, of the spread of science and rationality, of modernization and industrialization, and probably equality and democracy as well. And this will immediately destroy the central moral claim of the 'core doctrine' of nationalism, namely, the autonomy of national self-consciousness.

Now Kedourie can retort by beginning from the very first sentence of his book: 'Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.'[19] Every part of the nationalist doctrine, he will argue, can be taken apart and shown to have been derived from some species of European thought. It is totally alien to the non-European world: 'it is neither something indigenous to these areas nor an irresistible tendency of the human spirit everywhere, but rather an importation from Europe clearly branded with the mark of its origin'.[20] For the non-European world, in short, nationalist thought does not constitute an autonomous discourse.

Once that position has been surrendered, Kedourie can fire volley after volley directed at the spurious claims of a liberal doctrine of nationalism. The

argument that culture, and more specifically, language, uniquely defines a nation is an invention of 19th century European writers, particularly Herder, Schlegel, Fichte and Schleiermacher, which has been subsequently taken up by nationalist intellectuals of the East. The emphasis, again, on history as a distinct mode of thought in which the life of the nation can be represented and indeed experienced is also a European innovation subsequently absorbed into the intellectual life of the new nationalisms. 'Nationalist doctrine … decrees that just as nations exist, so nations by definition must have a past.'[21] So every nationalism has invented a past for the nation; every nationalism speaks through a discourse, 'historical in its form but apologetic in its substance', which claims to demonstrate the rise, progress and efflorescence of its own particular genius. Modern European intellectual fashion not only decrees that a nation must have a past, it also demands that it have a future. Have faith in the historical progress of man, it preaches, and history will not let you down. The idea of progress, once again a European invention, 'is a secularized and respectable version of the medieval millennium'.[22] It goes hand in hand with an extremist, millennial style of politics, made respectable all over the world in the years following the French Revolution. 'This frenzied meliorism, which in its religious form was long suppressed and disreputable, in its secular form became the dominant strand of the political tradition first of Europe and then of the whole world.'[23] The antipathy which one often notices in nationalist revivals in Asia and Africa, the superficial rejection of things Western, is not really a rejection at all. It is part and parcel of this extremist style of politics, where the leaders of the revolution will use any means available to reach their goals, including 'conscious and deliberate manipulation of what [is], in their eyes, primitive superstition'.[24] Thus, when Bipin Chandra Pal glorifies Kali, the dark goddess of destruction with a garland of human heads round her neck, blood dripping from the severed heads, he is 'in a line of succession from Robespierre's conjunction of virtue and terror'. '. . . the mainspring of nationalism in Asia and Africa is the same secular millennialism which had its rise and development in Europe and in which society is subjected to the will of a handful of visionaries who, to achieve their vision, must destroy all barriers between private and public'.[25] Yet another element of this extremist style of politics exported from Europe is the 'pathetic fallacy', known and demonstrated as false in the classical texts on power in every non-European civilization, which asserts 'that a government is the same as the subjects and is flesh of their flesh' and 'that the aims and interests of government are the very same as those for which the governed work and struggle'.[26] The new claimants to power in the nations of Asia and Africa constantly and profitably use this fallacy in a 'rhetoric of the heart', a fervent, impassioned, romantic, and inherently false, discourse.

'Resentment and impatience, the depravity of the rich and the virtue of the poor, the guilt of Europe and the innocence of Asia and Africa, salvation through violence, the coming reign of universal love':[27] those are the elements of nationalist thought. Each of them is an export from Europe, like the printing press, the radio, and television. Nationalist opposition to European rule is

driven by a faith in a theory. Yet the theory itself, and indeed the very attitude of faith in a theory, are the gifts of Europe to the rest of the world. Nationalism sets out to assert its freedom from European domination. But in the very conception of its project, it remains a prisoner of the prevalent European intellectual fashions.

Ill

The last sentence is not really a paraphase of Kedourie, because he does not pose the problem in those terms. But it would be a logical implication of his critique of the liberal doctrine of nationalism if it was situated in the context of a different theoretical problem. What Kedourie does not see, and his liberal antagonists do not recognize, are the far-reaching implications of the argument that nationalist thought does not, and indeed cannot, constitute an autonomous discourse. Kedourie merely uses the argument as a convenient stick with which to beat the liberals, by showing that nationalism is an inauthentic and misguided attempt to reach illusory ideals that can never be reached and that its only consequence is violence, destruction and tyranny. The liberal, on the other hand, can object, quite justifiably, that this characterization of nationalism as something essentially irrational and illiberal is unwarranted. He then points to the specific socio-historical conditions in which most of these nationalist movements occur and suggests that one adopt a charitable view and try to understand these movements as more or less rational attempts made under difficult conditions to pursue the now universally accepted ideals of enlightenment and progress. If the conditions are right, there is reason enough to believe that these nationalisms would succeed in finding their way towards that goal. The liberal-rationalist, in other words, refuses to pose the lack of autonomy of nationalist discourse as a theoretical problem.

Indeed, to put it plainly, the Enlightenment view of rationality and progress and the historical values enshrined in that view are shared by both sides in the debate. But starting from this premise the conservatives argue, whether explicitly like Kedourie or in the form of a more implicit structure of assumptions as in a great deal of European historiography on nationalist movements in the colonial world — which sees them as a congeries of factions, patron-client relationships, traditional loyalties clothed in the garb of modern political organizations, etc. — that the non-European peoples are culturally incapable of acquiring the values of the Enlightenment. The liberals, on the other hand, assert that these irrational and regressive features are only a hangover from the past, that these countries too are involved in the historical task of modernization, and once the conditions which are detrimental to progress are removed there is no reason why they should not also proceed to approximate the values that have made the West what it is today. But neither side can pose the problem in a form in which the question can be asked: why is it that non-European colonial countries have no historical alternative but to try to approximate the given attributes of modernity when that very process of approximation means their continued subjection under a world order which only sets their tasks for them and over which they have no control?

I will now argue that it is not possible to pose this theoretical problem within the ambit of bourgeois-rationalist thought, whether conservative or liberal. For to pose it is to place thought itself, including thought that is supposedly rational and scientific, within a discourse *of power*. It is to question the very universality, the 'givenness', the sovereignty of that thought, to go to its roots and thus radically to criticize it. It is to raise the possibility that it is not just military might or industrial strength, but thought itself, which can dominate and subjugate. It is to approach the field of discourse, historical, philosophical and scientific, as a battleground of political power.

From such a perspective, the problem of nationalist thought becomes the particular manifestation of a much more general problem, namely, the problem of the bourgeois-rationalist conception of knowledge, established in the post-Enlightenment period of European intellectual history, as the moral and epistemic foundation for a supposedly universal framework of thought which perpetuates, in a real and not merely a metaphorical sense, a colonial domination. It is a framework of knowledge which proclaims its own universality; its validity, it pronounces, is independent of cultures. Nationalist thought, in agreeing to become 'modern', accepts the claim to universality of this 'modern' framework of knowledge. Yet it also asserts the autonomous identity of a national culture. It thus simultaneously rejects and accepts the dominance, both epistemic and moral, of an alien culture. Is knowledge then independent of cultures? If not, can there be knowledge which is independent of power? To pose the problem thus is to situate knowledge itself within a dialectic that relates culture to power.

In order to show a little more clearly the generality of this problem, it will be worth our while to digress into a recent debate about the cognitive status of anthropology as a science of cross-cultural understanding.[28] The problem is posed most sharply within the discipline of anthropology because here, as one participant in the debate puts it, the scientist consciously 'sets himself to understand a culture which is not his own'.[29] The anthropologist, consequently, must answer the question whether, and in what ways, culture differences affect cognition.

The most familiar problem which the Western anthropologist faces when trying to understand non-Western cultures is when beliefs held by other peoples turn out to be manifestly irrational and false when judged in terms of Western criteria of rationality or truth. The question then arises: how is one to interpret the fact that large numbers of people collectively hold beliefs that are false? Is it fair, or legitimate, or valid, to proceed by designating such beliefs as false and then to try and find out why, or how, such irrational beliefs are communally held? Would that not involve the bias of ethnocentrism? Several alternative answers have been proposed to this question. One of them seeks to apply what is called 'the principle of charity', derived from a proposal put forward by the philosopher Donald Davidson[30] which suggests that when confronted by large sets of communal beliefs which apparently seem false by our standards of rationality, we should be charitable in our interpretation and 'take it as given that most beliefs are correct'. Among the set of alternative interpretations of

these beliefs, then, we (in this case, the anthropologist) should select the one which makes the largest possible number of beliefs true; that is to say, the strategy of interpretation should be to maximize the area of agreement between the anthropologist and the people he is studying. The underlying assumption is, of course, that it is only when such an area of agreement exists that interpretation becomes possible.

The pragmatic argument in favour of this principle is that even when other cultures seem vastly different from our own, the principle of charity can make large areas of those cultures open to interpretation in terms of the specific social circumstances in which those people live, especially in the area of beliefs which inform practical activity. The reason is that for any community with an ongoing social process, it is very unlikely that their everyday practical activities will be guided, by large-scale communal error. There is, therefore, or so it is argued, good reason to think that the principle of charity (or its variants such as the 'principle of humanity'[31]) may yield fairly satisfactory results in at least those areas of cross-cultural understanding which involve practical activity.

Already we notice the parallels between the debate on nationalism and this one on anthropology, including a profusion of such enchantingly liberal sentiments as 'charity' and 'humanity'. The difficulty with these principles is, first of all, to decide what it means to specify adequately the social circumstances in which a community lives. Can this be done at all? Second, can we identify the particular outcomes which the community desires when it engages in particular acts, so that we can judge whether those acts, or the beliefs informing them, are rational or not? Most practising anthropologists do not seem to think that either of these is feasible. The dominant orientations in the discipline do not therefore explicitly subscribe to either of these principles. Instead they are in favour of either rejecting any search for rationality or proclaiming that there can be several alternative rationalities.

An influential approach which asserts the irrelevance of rationality in cross-cultural understanding is functionalism. Here the object of understanding is not to judge whether particular beliefs or actions are rational or not, but to discover in what ways they contribute to the functioning and persistence of the social system as a whole. Thus, whether or not particular acts are intelligible to us in terms of the avowed objectives for which they are performed, their continued performance may still be satisfactorily explained in terms of the (perhaps unintended) consequences of those acts which promote the maintenance of the social system.

The second anthropological approach which also denies the usefulness of looking for rational explanations of behaviour is the one which claims that apparently strange behaviour should be interpreted as symbolic acts: their meaning should be sought for in terms of their place within an entire symbolic pattern, whose fundamental structure may also be latent in consciousness, by which man's perception of nature, of his relations with nature and with other men, are ordered. The anthropologist's task is to discover this latent structure of the symbolic order, which will then make particular beliefs or actions meaningful in relation to other beliefs or actions within that order.

Many substantive problems have been raised about the validity and the usefulness of both functionalist and symbolist (structuralist) explanations in anthropology, but these need not concern us here. We are more interested in what the 'rationalists' have to say about these approaches. Their main argument is that both functionalism and symbolism skirt around the crucial question: why do people continue to hold beliefs which seem to us to be patently false? What, in other words, are the reasons for their acting in this apparently absurd way? And if those reasons can indeed be attributed to the specific social circumstances in which the beliefs are held, and not merely explained away by referring to the functional requirements of a social system or the internal logic of the symbolic order, then why should we not be justified in holding on to the superior cognitive status of the criteria of scientific rationality and attempting to interpret other cultures from that cognitive position?

Here there is a clear division within the rationalist camp, because one group has replied that what seems to us as an intelligible reason for acting may not be so for others. That is to say, although the actions of others may not seem rational to us, they may be perfectly rational according to entirely different criteria of rationality. The radical assertion then is: the notion of rationality may not be cross-cultural; other cultures may have their own, and equally valid because incommensurable, standards of rationality. By trying to judge other cultures according to our criteria of rationality and pronouncing them irrational, we are being unjustifiably ethnocentric, because there is no single cross-culturally valid standard of rationality: rationality is relative.

Now, there can be a strong argument of relativism which insists that each culture could have its own distinctive categorical scheme for ordering reality and its own distinctive system of logic which would make the beliefs held by people living in that culture thoroughly incommensurable with beliefs held in other cultures. This, of course, would invalidate any attempts at cross-cultural understanding, because no interpretation from outside a culture would be justified. However, the argument also depends crucially on our being able to determine the cognitive boundaries of a culture, and this is by no means a straightforward procedure. If the thought-system of a culture is indeed incommensurably different from those of others, we would not even have the background of consensus necessary to recognize the differences. This would make relativism completely unintelligible. Further, the argument applies not only to cases of judging cultures from the outside. If cognitive boundaries of cultures are indeterminate, we cannot reliably know whether we are inside or outside a culture when we attempt to interpret it. In other words, a strictly relativist position would have to be based on a holistic conception of cultures which would make any kind of interpretation, whether from within or without a culture, impossible, because our own perception of the full cognitive map of a culture — even the one which we belong to — can only be partial, and in many respects individually specific.

But most of those who have argued for a 'relativist' position on the matter of cross-cultural understanding do not seem to favour so strong an interpretation of their case. And curiously enough, many of those who think that a strictly

relativist philosophical position would destroy any viable basis for a scientific understanding of society, also assert that weakly interpreted, as a basis for a sympathetic and imaginative understanding of other cultures, the relativist case says a lot of important things about an undogmatic, non-ethnocentric methodology of the social sciences. We are back, it would seem, to some kind of 'principle of charity', however formulated.

This leaves us with a somewhat paradoxical view of the debate. The 'relativist' argument originates in a critique of 'rationalist' methods of interpretation in which the main attack is directed against exaggerated claims of universal validity for those standards of evaluating social beliefs which are only specific to modern industrial society in the West. The 'relativist' thus accuses the 'rationalist' of holding an essentialist view of his own culture as a result of which he uses elements of his own belief-system to judge beliefs held in other cultures and pronounces the latter, either explicitly or by implication, to be erroneous or inferior, overlooking the fact that his own beliefs are the product of a specific socio-historical context which is different from the contexts of other cultures. This constitutes the unjustifiable ethnocentric bias in 'rationalist' attempts at cross-cultural understanding. On the other hand, the 'non-relativist' argues that relativism, in so far as it can claim a distinctive philosophical foundation, itself rests on an essentialist conception of cultures which militates against the validity of any scientific attempt at cross-cultural understanding. Each side, it would appear, ends up by accusing the other of the same crime: ahistorical essentialism.[32]

I will argue that this paradoxical situation is in fact an accurate reflection of the spurious philosophical premises on which the debate has been conducted in Anglo-American social science. A cultural essentialism has been germane to the very way in which the sciences of society have developed in the West in the post-Enlightenment period, at least since the early 19th century. It is an essentialism which is much more deep-rooted than the obvious cultural arrogance of colonial anthropology or the inept policy prescriptions of neo-Weberian modernization theory. It is indeed an aspect of the post-Enlightenment view of the world in which the idea of rational knowledge assumes a very definite form. The sciences of nature become the paradigm of all rational knowledge. And the principal characteristic of these sciences as they are now conceived is their relation to an entirely new idea of man's *control* over nature — a progressive and ceaseless process of the appropriation of nature to serve human 'interests'. By extension, a notion of 'interests' also enters into the conception of the new sciences of society. The rational knowledge of human society comes to be organized around concepts such as wealth, productive efficiency, progress, etc. all of which are defined in terms of the promotion of some social 'interests'. Yet 'interests' in society are necessarily diverse; indeed, they are stratified in terms of the relations of power. Consequently, the subject-object relation between man and nature which is central to the new conception of the sciences of nature is now subtly transferred, through the 'rational' conception of society, to relations between man and man. Thus, the sciences of society become the knowledge of the Self and of the Other. Construed in

terms of rationality, it necessarily also becomes a means to *thepower* of the Self over the Other. In short, knowledge becomes the means to the domination of the world.

And yet, the notion of rationality which is involved in the problem of universality and relativism is not a simple problem of positive science. If the question is 'Are the beliefs held by particular groups of people true or false?' a reasonable approach would seem to be to answer the question by reference to the currently accepted methods, procedures and theories in the particular scientific discipline to which the belief relates. Thus, the question of whether Kalabari beliefs about the curative properties of particular herbs are true or not can be answered within the theoretical knowledge currently provided by medical science, including considerations of possible psychosomatic effects of the particular procedures by which the drugs are administered in Kalabari society. However, it is clear that not all beliefs in society will admit a meaningful scientific answer as to whether they are true or not. There are large classes of beliefs for which the criteria true/false make little sense in terms of science as we know it today. However, to the extent that questions of this sort are at all answerable within currently established scientific theories, ethnicity or culture will be in principle an irrelevant consideration.

But, by pointing out that answers to such questions are only meaningful within 'currently accepted' scientific methods or theories, or that they can or cannot be answered only in terms of science 'as we know it today', we are acknowledging the historicity of scientific methods themselves — the fact that they rest only on the currently prevailing consensus among scientists, with a broad penumbra where they are subjects of varying degrees of contention, that even currently accepted methods are subject to change, including paradigmatic changes of the Kuhnian type, and that they too are affected (assuming we are not prepared to go so far as to say 'determined') by the socio-historical processes in the societies in which they appear. Again, when we say that in answering questions of this sort, ethnicity or culture are 'in principle' irrelevant, we recognize the possibility that this may not actually be the case in every instance of scientific practice. There can be, for example, a major problem of determining precisely *what* a particular belief is, because it may involve a complicated and not unproblematical exercise of trying to unravel the *meaning* of particular utterances or acts or behaviour of particular people. Here, the question of culture may well be considered crucial, and a host of problems would have to be sorted out before we can say that we have identified a belief which is held by a particular group of people. But these are problems which arise *before* the stage where we can ask whether a belief is true or not.

The second way in which ethnicity becomes relevant to scientific practice concerns the social structure of scientific research itself, in this case in the international or inter-cultural dimension. It could be argued that a given structure of the scientific profession — its pattern of funding, its assignment of research priorities, its very choice of problems for investigation and, inevitably, therefore, its judgment of what does or does not constitute a legitimate or worthwhile subject for scientific research — may be so biased in geographical,

and hence cultural, terms that it overlooks, ignores-or dogmatically rejects insights into the nature of the physical or social world which may have been developed in supposedly 'non-scientific' cultures. These insights may form a part of the technological practices of various people in various parts of the world; or of the expressive or symbolic ordering of their relations with nature and with one another; or of their pre-theoretical practical guides to the activities of everyday life; or of their speculative philosophies about the nature of the world; or (who knows?) of their theoretical formulations about specific physical or social processes which have been overlooked or ignored by the currently dominant international structure of science because they were embedded within larger speculative systems of philosophy that were deemed irrational, archaic or morally repugnant. In this sense, ethnocentrism does affect the development of scientific knowledge.

But when one raises the question of whether people in other cultures are rational or not, one does not simply mean whether their beliefs are true in relation to currently accepted scientific theories. Anyone with even a modicum of awareness of the philosophical problems involved in answering the question 'Is such and such a statement scientifically true?' will realize that it is only in very rare cases that one can obtain even a reasonably unambiguous answer in the affirmative. If this was the meaning of the concept of rational belief, then the problem of rationality in sociological theory would be reduced to one of very minor importance, because very few beliefs held in societies anywhere in the world, including the contemporary Western world, would, by this definition, qualify as rational. No, rationality as the notion is used in current debates is wider than mere scientific truth. It is seen as incorporating a certain way of looking at the properties of nature, of ordering our knowledge of those properties in a certain consistent and coherent way, of using this knowledge for adaptive advantage vis-a-vis nature. It is, as Max Weber would have put it - and it does not matter if present-day votaries of rationality do not agree with his definition of its precise content — an ethic. Rationality becomes the normative principle of a certain way of life which is said to promote a certain way of thinking, namely, science. Hence, the question of culture does become relevant.

It is important to note, however, that the stricter definition of scientific truth is now contained within the wider notion of rationality as an ethic. So much so that the ethic of rationality is now seen to be characteristic of 'scientifically-oriented' or 'theoretically-oriented' cultures. And thus, by a conceptual sleight of hand, the epistemic privilege which is due to 'scientific truth' is appropriated by entire cultures. What results is an *essentialism:* certain historically specific correspondences between certain elements in the structure of beliefs in European society and certain, albeit spectacular, changes in techno-economic conditions of production are attributed the quality of essences which are said to characterize Western cultures as a whole. It is an essentialism which, when imposed on historical time, divides up the history of Western society into pre-scientific and scientific, and casts every other culture of the world into the darkness of unscientific traditionalism. Initially, this essentialism enjoys a straightforwardly ethnic privilege: the* superiority of the European people. Later,

it is given a moral privilege, encompassing as in the post-Enlightenment theories of progress — positivism, utilitarianism, Weberian sociology — a historically progressive philosophy of life. And finally, when all of these privileged positions are challenged with the spread of anti-colonial movements, it is the epistemic privilege which has become the last bastion of global supremacy for the cultural values of Western industrial societies. It is a privilege which sanctions the assertion of cultural supremacy while assiduously denying at the same time that it has anything to do with cultural evaluations. Relativist or rationalist, each one is keen to outdo the other in the radicalness of his stand against ethnocentric bias.

It is not trivial to point out here that in this whole debate about the possibility of cross-cultural understanding, the scientist is always one of 'us': he is a Western anthropologist, modern, enlightened and self-conscious (and it does not matter what his nationality or the colour of his skin happens to be). The objects of study are 'other' cultures — always non-Western. No one has raised the possibility, and the accompanying problems, of a 'rational' understanding of 'us' by a member of the 'other' culture — of, let us say, a Kalahari anthropology of the white man. It could be argued, of course, that when we consider the problem of relativism, we consider the relations between cultures in the abstract and it does not matter if the subject-object relation between Western and non-Western cultures is reversed: the relations would be isomorphic.

But it would not: that is precisely why we do not, and probably never will, have a Kalahari anthropology of the white man. And that is why even a Kalahari anthropology of the Kalahari will adopt the same representational form, if not the same substantive conclusions, as the white man's anthropology of the Kalahari. For there is a relation of power involved in the very conception of the autonomy of cultures. That is, in fact, why the problem of nationalist thought is only a particular manifestation of this much more general problem. If nationalism expresses itself in a frenzy of irrational passion, it does so *because* it seeks to represent itself in the image of the Enlightenment *and fails* to do so. For Enlightenment itself, to assert its sovereignty as the universal ideal, needs its Other; if it could ever actualize itself in the real world as the truly universal, it would in fact destroy itself. No matter how much the liberal-rationalist may wonder, the Cunning of Reason has not met its match in nationalism.[33] On the contrary, it has seduced, apprehended and imprisoned it: that is what this book is all about.

rv

So far I have argued that the problems of a liberal doctrine of nationalism can be traced back to a much more fundamental question about the moral and epistemic status of a bourgeois-rational conception of universal history. However, I cannot hope to settle the matter simply by designating it as a problem of 'bourgeois' knowledge. For we see much the same sorts of problems appearing in Marxist discussions of nationalism as well.

I will not go into the issue of what Marx himself had to say about

nationalism.[34] However, what can be said quite definitely on this subject is that in his own work Marx never directly addressed himself to nationalism as a theoretical problem. Much of the debate on this question is about the implications of his general theoretical scheme, or about inferences from the various comments he made on the subject during a very active literary and political career. We are more concerned here about the more influential interpretations of Marxism addressed to what has come to be called 'the national question', and more particularly the problem of nationalism in the non-European world where it has taken the compendium form of 'the national *and* colonial question'.

The question was long debated in the Second and Third Internationals.[35] The most remarkable contribution came from Lenin who, working out his ideas torn the immediate practical problems facing the revolution in a huge multi-ethnic empire, highlighted the central question of political democracy as the keystone of Marxist analyses of nationalism. It was this emphasis which led tyiim to formulate his famous thesis on the rights of nations to self-determination.[36] But Lenin's proposals were not directed towards the Construction of a general theoretical paradigm for the study of nationalism, and pin the tumultuous period of national liberation movements since the 1930s, Marxists have continued to argue about the question.

Horace B. Davis has recently attempted a summarization of several of these arguments.[37] He too acknowledges that there are two types of nationalism,[38] one e nationalism of the Enlightenment which 'was by and large rational rather ian emotional', and the other 'based on culture and tradition', developed by German romantic writers such as Herder and Fichte, which asserted that the Nation was a natural community and therefore 'something sacred, eternal, Organic, carrying a deeper justification than the works of men'. But even this Second type was European in origin. 'This idea of the nation as preceding the tate and eventually leading to its formation is very distinctly European; it has o relevance to the problems of newly formed nations such as most of those in Africa, where the state preceded the nation and conditioned its whole existence.'[39]

What then about nationalism in the non-European world? The national question here is, of course, historically fused with a colonial question. The Assertion of national identity was, therefore, a form of the struggle against Colonial exploitation. Yet an assertion of traditional cultural values would often Se inconsistent with the conditions of historical progress. There is thus a very eal dilemma: 'whether to consider nationalism a rationalist, secular, modern movement, or whether to emphasize the more distinctively national elements, many of which are frankly atavistic and irrelevant to modern conditions'.[40] But no matter how tormenting the dilemma for those in the thick of the struggle, the outcome itself was historically determined. Between the modern and the traditional trends within nationalism, 'the one that wins out in the end is the modernizing, Vesternizing element, but it may be only after a prolonged struggle'.[41]

The question therefore was not one of taking a moral position with respect to lationalism qua nationalism, but one of judging its probable historical Consequences. 'Nationalism, then, is not in itself irrational, but it may be

irrationally applied. Atavistic nationalism cannot be condemned out of hand; when considered as part of a movement for a people to regain its pride and self respect, it has a constructive aspect. But belligerent, aggressive, chauvinistic nationalism is a menace and thus irrational from the point of view of humanity as a whole.'[42] Nationalism had to be looked at in its instrumental aspect: whether or not it furthered the universal movement of historical progress. 'Nationalism', Davis says,

> is not a thing, even an abstract thing, but a process, an implement... One does not take a position for or against a hammer, or a can opener, or any other implement. When used for murder, the hammer is no doubt a weapon; when used for building a house, it is a constructive tool. Nationalism considered as the vindication of a particular culture is morally neutral; considered as a movement against national oppression, it has a positive moral content; considered as the vehicle of aggression, it is morally indefensible.[43]

This book by Davis may be a particularly unsubtle example of Marxist thinking on the subject of nationalism. If so, let us take a more recent, and in every way more sophisticated, treatment of the subject and see where it gets us: I have in mind Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.[44] Anderson's intervention is highly unorthodox, because far from following the dominant tendency in Marxist discussions on the 'national question', typically represented by Stalin's oft-quoted formulation,[45] he refuses to 'define' a nation by a set of external and abstract criteria. On the contrary, he fundamentally subverts the determinist scheme by asserting that the nation is 'an imagined political community'. It is not uniquely produced by the constellation of certain objective social facts; rather, the nation is 'thought out', 'created'.

At first glance, this may seem to be fairly close to Gellner's position: 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.' But Anderson is quick to mark the difference. For Gellner 'invent' means 'fabrication' and 'falsity', a piece of historical disingenuousness; he cannot regard the thinking out of a nation as genuine creation.[46] What does 'creation' mean? Let us follow Anderson's argument.

Historically, the political community of nation superseded the preceding 'cultural systems' of religious community and dynastic realm. In the process there occurred 'a fundamental change ... in modes of apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to "think" the nation'.[47] It was the 'coalition of Protestantism and print-capitalism' which brought about this change. 'What, in a positive sense, made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity.'[48] The innumerable and varied ideolects of pre-print Europe were now 'assembled, within definite limits, into print-languages far fewer in number'. This was crucial for the emergence of national consciousness because print-languages created 'unified fields of exchange and communications' below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars, gave a new fixity to language, and created new kinds of 'languages-of-power'

since some dialects were closer to the print-languages and dominated them while others remained dialects because they could not insist on their own printed form.

Once again historically, three distinct types or 'models' of nationalism emerged. 'Creole nationalism' of the Americas was built upon the ambitions of classes whose economic interests were ranged against the metropolis. It also drew upon liberal and enlightened ideas from Europe which provided ideological criticisms of imperialism and *anciens regimes.* But the shape of the new imagined communities was created by 'pilgrim Creole functionaries and provincial Creole printmen'. Yet as a 'model' for emulation, Creole nationalism remained incomplete, because it lacked linguistic communality and its state form was both retrograde and *congruent* with the *arbitrary administrative* boundaries of the imperial order.

The second 'model' was that of the linguistic nationalisms of Europe, a model of the independent national state which henceforth became 'available for pirating'.

> But precisely because it was by then a known model, it imposed certain 'standards' from which too-marked deviations were impossible .. . Thus the 'populist' character of the early European nationalisms, even when led, demagogically, by the most backward social groups, was deeper than in the Americas: serfdom had to go, legal slavery was unimaginable — not least because the conceptual model was set in ineradicable place.[49]

The third 'model' was provided by 'official nationalism' — typically, Russia. *This involved the imposition of cultural homogeneity from the top, through* state action. 'Russification' was a project which could be, and was, emulated elsewhere.

All three modular forms were available to third world nationalisms in the 20th century. Just as Creole functionaries first perceived a national meaning in the imperial administrative unit, so did the 'brown or black Englishman' when he made his bureaucratic pilgrimage to the metropolis. On return,

> the apex of his looping flight was the highest administrative centre to which he was assigned: Rangoon, Accra, Georgetown, or Colombo. Yet in each constricted journey he found bilingual travelling companions with whom he came to feel a growing communality. In his journey he understood rather quickly that his point of origin — conceived either ethnically, linguistically, or geographically — was of small significance... it did not fundamentally determine his destination or his companions. Out of this pattern came that subtle, half-concealed transformation, step by step, of the colonial-state into the national-state, a transformation made possible not only by a solid continuity of personnel, but by the established skein of journeys through which each state was experienced by its functionaries.[50]

But this only made possible the emergence of a national consciousness. Its rapid spread and acquisition of popular roots in the 20th century are to be explained by the fact that these journeys were now made by 'huge and variegated crowds'. Enormous increases in physical mobility, imperial

'Russification' programmes sponsored by the colonial state as well as by corporate capital, and the spread of modern-style education created a large bilingual section which could mediate linguistically between the metropolitan nation and the colonized people. The vanguard role of the intelligentsia derived from its bilingual literacy. 'Print-literacy already made possible the imagined community floating in homogeneous, empty time … Bilingualism meant access, through the European language-of-state, to modern Western culture in the broadest sense, and, in particular, to the models of nationalism, nation-ness, and nation-state produced elsewhere in the course of the nineteenth century.'[51]

Third-world nationalisms in the 20th century thus came to acquire a 'modular' character. 'They can, and do, draw on more than a century and a half of human experience and three earlier models of nationalism. Nationalist leaders are thus in a position consciously to deploy civil and military educational systems modelled on official nationalism's; elections, party organizations, and cultural celebrations modelled on the popular nationalisms of 19th century Europe; and the citizen-republican idea brought into the world by the Americas.' Above all, the very idea of 'nation' is now nestled firmly in virtually all print-languages, and nation-ness is virtually inseparable from political consciousness.

'In a world in which the national state is the overwhelming norm, all of this means that nations can now be imagined without linguistic communality — not in the naive spirit of *nostros los Americanos,* but out of a general awareness of what modern history has demonstrated to be possible.'[52]

Anderson's chief contribution to the Marxist debate on the national question *is to emphatically pose the ideological creation of the nation* as a centra/ problem in the study of national movements. In doing this he also highlights the social process of creation of modern language communities. Yet, instead of pursuing the varied, and often contradictory, *political* possibilities inherent in this process, Anderson seals up his theme with a sociological determinism. What, if we look closely, are the substantive differences between Anderson and Gellner on 20th century nationalism? None. Both point out a fundamental change in ways of perceiving the social world which occurs before nationalism can emerge: Gellner relates this change to the requirements of 'industrial society', Anderson more ingeniously to the dynamics of'print-capitalism'. Both describe the characteristics of the new cultural homogeneity which is sought to be imposed on the emerging nation: for Gellner this is the imposition of a common high culture on the variegated complex of local folk cultures, for Anderson the process involves the formation of a 'print-language' and the shared experience of the 'journeys' undertaken by the colonized intelligentsia. In the end, both see in third-world nationalisms a profoundly 'modular' character. They are invariably shaped according to contours outlined by given historical models: 'objective, inescapable imperative', 'too-marked deviations … impossible'.

Where in all this is the working of the imagination, the intellectual process of creation? For Gellner the problem does not arise, because even when nations are 'invented', it is out of necessity: some distinguishing cultural marks simply

have to be chosen in order to identify the nation, and it is not a particularly interesting problem for him to study the intellectual process by which this is done. But Anderson? He too confines his discussion to the 'modular' character of 20th century nationalisms, without noticing the twists and turns, the suppressed possibilities, the contradictions still unresolved. Consequently, in place of Gellner's superciliousness, Anderson has to conclude on a note of unmitigated political pessimism: 'No one imagines, I presume, that the broad masses of the Chinese people give a fig for what happens along the border between Cambodia and Vietnam. Nor is it at all likely that Khmer and Vietnamese peasants wanted wars between their peoples, or were consulted in the matter. In a very real sense these were "chancellery wars" in which popular nationalism was mobilized after the fact and always in a language of self-defence.'[53] Thus, it is all a matter of a vanguard intelligentsia coming to state power by 'mobilizing' popular nationalism and using the 'machiavellian' instruments of official nationalism. Like religion and kinship, nationalism is an anthropological fact, and there is nothing else to it.

Marxists have found it extremely hard to escape the liberal dilemma we described in the previous section. More often than not, they have adopted exactly the same methods as those of the liberals — either a resort to *sociologism*, i.e. fitting nationalism to certain universal and inescapable sociological constraints of the modern age, or alternatively, reducing the two contending trends within nationalism, one traditional and conservative and the other rational and progressive, to their sociological determinants, or invoking a *functionalism*, i.e. taking up an appropriate attitude towards a specific nationalism by reference to its consequences for universal history. The problem can be even better illustrated if we shift our sights from general theoretical treatments to the analysis of particular nationalist movements. I will refer to a debate about India, a country where Marxist historiography has had to establish itself by trying to confront a nationalist intellectual orthodoxy.

V

To start with, Marxist historians in India had taken their cue from a well-known remark by Marx in his 1853 article on 'British Rule in India':

> England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.[54]

Here too, as in the liberal history of nationalism, history becomes episodic, marked by one Great Event which is in every sense the watershed, dividing up historical time into past and future, tradition and modernity, stagnation and development — and inescapably, into bad and good: despotism and liberty, superstition and enlightenment, priestcraft and the triumph of reason. For India, the Great Event was the advent of British rule which terminated centuries of despotism, superstition and vegetative life and ushered in a new era of change — of'destruction' as well as 'regeneration', destruction of antiquated tradition and the emergence of modern, secular and national forces.

A whole generation of Marxist historians of India,[55] despite the many political differences among them, agreed that the intellectual history of India in the 19th and 20th centuries was a history of the struggle between the forces of reaction and those of progress. The approach was both sociological and functional. There was the attempt to reduce 'traditional-conservative' and 'rational-modernist' ideas to their social roots, i.e. to 'reactionary' and 'progressive' classes, respectively. At the same time, there was the attempt to judge the effectivity of these ideas in terms of their consequences, i.e. whether or not they furthered the national democratic struggle against colonial domination and exploitation. And the results of these two simultaneous inquiries often turned out to be contradictory. The national was not always secular and modern, the popular and democratic quite often traditional and even fanatically anti-modern.

The 1970s saw several attempts to question the earlier applications of Marxism to Indian intellectual history. In 1972 official celebrations were held to mark the bicentenary of the birth of Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), the first great 'modernizer' and father of the 19th century 'renaissance' in Indian thought. A volume of critical essays[56] brought out on the occasion contained several contributions in the earlier genre, but there were others which questioned the whole premise of the characterization of the 'renaissance' and even the categories of tradition/modernity. The main theoretical ground on which these critiques were located was a reassessment of the nature of the relationship between culture and structure or, to use an orthodox Marxist terminology which already in the very thrust of the critique seemed to lose some of its theoretical value, between superstructure and base. It was all very well, these critics argued, to pick out the many undoubtedly modern elements in the thought of the 19th century social reformers and ideologues, but what significance do these elements of modernity acquire when looked at in the context of the evolving colonial economy of the same period, of massive deindustrialization and destitution, of unbearable pressures on the land leading to a virtually irreversible process of regressive rent-exploitation and stagnation in levels of productivity, of the crushing of peasant resistance, of the growing social gulf rather than bonds of alliance between a modernized, western-educated, urban elite and the rest of the nation? In what sense can this modernity be reconciled with any meaningful conception of the national-popular?

These questions were posed from within a Marxist framework, but earlier Marxist formulations on the 19th century renaissance were severely criticized. Sumit Sarkar,[57] for instance, showed that Indian Marxists in interpreting the evolution of Indian thought as a conflict between two trends, 'westernist' or 'modernist' on the one hand and 'traditionalist' on the other, had, notwithstanding the many analytical intricacies, wholeheartedly plumped for westernism

as the historically progressive trend. He then argued: 'An unqualified equation of the "westernizers" ... with modernism or progress almost inevitably leads on to a more positive assessment of British rule, English education, and the nineteenth-century protagonists of both...' In fact, the entire 'tradition-modernization' dichotomy served as a cover under which 'the grosser facts of imperialist political and economic exploitation [were] very often quietly tucked away in a corner'. As facts stand, Rammohun Roy's break with tradition was 'deeply contradictory', accommodating within the same corpus of thinking numerous compromises with orthodox, Hindu-elitist and, by his own enlightened standards, clearly irrational ways of thought and practice, and in any case it was a break only 'on the intellectual plane and not at the level of basic social transformation'. In his economic thinking, he accepted *in toto* the then fashionable logic of free trade and seemed to visualize 'a kind of dependent but still real bourgeois development in Bengal in close collaboration with British merchants and entrepreneurs'. This was an utterly absurd illusion, because colonial subjection would never permit full-blooded bourgeois modernity but only a 'weak and distorted caricature'.[58]

The argument was therefore that while there were elements of modernity in the new cultural and intellectual movements in 19th century India, these cannot become meaningful unless they are located in their relation, on the one hand, to the changing socio-economic structure of the country, and on the other, to the crucial context of power, i.e. the reality of colonial subjection. When thus located, the achievements of early 19th century 'modernizers' such as Rammohun seemed limited within a Hindu-elitist, colonial, almost comprador, framework.

This argument was stated at much greater length in Asok Sen's study[59] of the career of another 19th century social reformer of Bengal, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891). Sen placed the problem in the theoretical context of Antonio Gramsci's discussion of the relation of intellectuals to more fundamental forces of social transformation. The mere acceptance of new ideas or their original structure of assumptions and implications did not in themselves mean much; major changes in thought and attitude were, in fact, brought about 'by the capacity of nascent social forces to achieve goals of transformation [often] not entirely clarified in the original postulates of reasoning or speculation'.[60] What was crucial, therefore, was a fundamental class striving for class hegemony and advance of social production. Without such a class, 'the cultural influence of intellectuals is reduced to an essentially abstract phenomenon giving no consistent direction of significant social renewal; their influence is limited to tiny intellectual groups who have no creative bonds with a broader social consensus'.[61]

In the specific context of 19th century Bengal, the middle class was not a fundamental class in this sense, nor were its intellectuals organic to any fundamental project of social transformation or conquest of hegemony. The new middle class was a product of English education. But in an economy under direct colonial control, in which there was little prospect for the release of forces of industrialization, the attempt 'to achieve through education what was denied

to the economy' was utterly anomalous.

> The new intelligentsia was stirred by various elements of western thought — the ideas of liberal freedom, rational humanism and scientific advance. But the learned aspirations of the middle class were undone by its dysfunctional role in the process of production; the former called for goals which the latter necessarily precluded. Hence, modernity could hardly be a force of objective social achievement. .. For a middle class with no positive role in social production, the theories of Locke, Bentham and Mill acted more as sources of confusion about the nature of the state and society under colonial rule ... the middle class had neither the position, nor the strength to mediate effectively between polity and production. There lay the travesty of imported ideas of individual rights and rationality.[62]

Vidyasagar's own attempts at social reform, for instance, placed great reliance upon liberal backing by the colonial government. The failure of those attempts showed that his hopes were misplaced. On the other hand, he did not find any effective support for his schemes from within his own class. When arguing for reform, Vidyasagar, despite his own professed disregard for the sanctity or reasonableness of the *śāstra,* felt compelled to look for scriptural support for his programmes. He did not think it feasible to attempt to create a 'nonconformism outside the bond of canonical orthodoxy'. In fact, this remained a major ideological anomaly in all 19th century attempts to 'modernize' religion and social practice — 'a spurious conciliation of Indian idealism and imported liberal sanctions' — which led to a major backlash after 1880 in the form of movements to 'revive tradition', movements that were openly hostile to the earlier decades of 'reason and enlightenment'.

> Thus, a reformation with no entrenchment in conditions of mass hegemony failed not only to produce its Anabaptist complement, but the reaction, when it inevitably set in, hastened the reformation to its day of burial.[63]

In Sen, therefore, the argument becomes sharper. The 19th century intelligentsia may have genuinely welcomed the new ideas of reason and rationality, and some may even have shown considerable courage and enterprise in seeking to 'modernize' social customs and attitudes. But the fundamental forces of transformation were absent in colonial society. As a result, there was no possibility for the emergence of a consistently rational set of beliefs or practices. Liberalism stood on highly fragile foundations; 'reason dwindled to merely individual means of self-gratification without social responsibility'.[64] The half-heartedness and ambiguity was part of the very process of bourgeois development in a colonial country. '... the dialectics of loyalty and opposition' did not permit 'a clear division among the native bourgeoisie or the entire middle class into two exclusive categories of collaborators and opponents of imperialism'.[65] In India, bourgeois opposition to imperialism was always ambiguous.

The attempt to relate developments in thought to the evolving socio-economic structure of a colonial country inevitably led, therefore, to the problem

of power: the subjection of a colonial country and the question of loyalty or opposition to the imperial power. And once put in that perspective, the modern and the national seemed to diverge in fundamental ways.

It is the problem of power which is placed at the centre of another critique of the 19th century 'renaissance' — Ranajit Guha's analysis of a play on the 1860-61 Indigo Uprising in Bengal by the playwright Dinabandhu Mitra.[66] This play has always been regarded in nationalist circles in Bengal as a remarkably bold indictment of the depredations of English planters in the Indian countryside and as a classical portrayal of the bravery and determination of the peasantry in their resistance to colonialism. But Guha shows the innately liberal-humanitarian assumptions underlying Dinabandhu's criticism of the planters, assumptions he shared with virtually the whole of the new intelligentsia of the 19th century. Thus, underlying the criticism of the lawlessness of the planters and of the action of a few foolish and inconsiderate English officials, there was an abiding faith in the rationality and impartiality of English law and in the good intentions of the colonial administration taken as a whole. Never did the thought occur in the minds of these newly enlightened gentlemen, despite their fondness for justice and liberty, to question the legitimacy of British rule in India. In fact, it was the very existence of British power in India that was regarded as the final and most secure guarantee against lawlessness, superstition and despotism. Not only that, the image of the resolute peasant defending his rights against the predatory planter, as represented in elite accounts such as Dinabandhu's *Nil Darpan*, is that of an enlightened liberal, conscious of his rights as an individual, willing to go to great lengths to defend those rights against recalcitrant officials, even succumbing to 'brief, intermittent bursts' of violence, but all the while believing in the fundamental legitimacy of the social order. This was a far cry from any truly revolutionary appreciation by a progressive intelligentsia of the strength of peasant resistance to colonialism and of its potentials for the construction of a new 'national-popular' consciousness. What the play does reveal is, in fact, an attitude of collaboration, between a colonial government and its educated native collaborators, sealed by the marriage of law and literacy. The sympathy of the intelligentsia for the victims of violence of indigo planters and the support by large sections of the rich and middling sorts of people in town and countryside for the cause of the peasants are explained by a specific conjuncture of interests and events. In the overall estimate, such opposition only opened up

> an immense hinterland of compromise and reformism into which to retreat from a direct contest for power with the colonial masters … And, thus, 'improvement', that characteristic ideological gift of nineteenth-century British capitalism, is made to pre-empt and replace the urge for a revolutionary transformation of society.

The formulation of the problem now encompasses a great deal of complexity in the relations between thought, culture and power. First of all, there is the question of the effectiveness of thought as a vehicle of change. If the imperatives,

conditions and consequences of change have been thought out within an elaborate and reasonably consistent framework of knowledge, does this itself indicate that the social potentials exist for the change to occur? The assumption here would be that if the conditions did not exist at least potentially, then the theory could not have been thought. Or is the more crucial element the existence of determinate social forces, in the form of a class or an alliance of classes, which have the will and strength to act as agents of transformation, perhaps even without the aid of an elaborately formulated theoretical apparatus to think out the process of change? The sociological determinist would say that the conditions for the emergence of a nationalist ideology for the transformation of an agrarian into an industrial society are present universally. The only point of interest for particular nationalisms is the specific cultural demarcation of a national identity which wills for itself a distinct political *unit. Yet the historical* evidence marshalled in the above debate suggests that the social forces which could be said to have favoured the transformation of a medieval agrarian society into a rational modern one were not unambiguously nationalist, while those that were opposed to colonial domination were not necessarily in favour of a transformation.

Second, there is the question of the relation of thought to the existing culture of the society, i.e. to the way in which the social code already provides a set of correspondences between signs and meanings to the overwhelming mass of the people. What are the necessary steps when a new group of thinkers and reformers seek to substitute a new code in the place of the old one? Do they set up a radical group of nonconformists, or do they gradually 'modernize' the tradition? If such a cultural transformation does take place, what is the role of an ideological leadership — a vanguard intelligentsia — in bringing it about?

Third, there is the question of the implantation into new cultures of categories and frameworks of thought produced in other — alien — cultural contexts. Is the positive knowledge contained in these frameworks neutral to the cultural context? Do they have different social consequences when projected on different socio-cultural situations? Even more interestingly, do the categories and theoretical relations themselves acquire new meanings in their new cultural context? What then of the positivity of knowledge?

Fourth, when the new framework of thought is directly associated with a relation of dominance in the cross-cultural context of power, what, in the new cultural context, are the specific changes which occur in the original categories and relations within the domain of thought? That is to say, if relations of dominance and subordination are perceived as existing *between* cultures, which is what happens under colonial rule, what are the specific ways in which frameworks of thought conceived in the context of the dominant culture are received and transformed in the subordinate culture?

Finally, all of the above relations between thought and culture have a bearing on still another crucial question — the changing relations of power *within* the society under colonial domination. And here, even if we grant that the social consequences of particular frameworks of thought produced in the metropolitan

countries would be drastically different in the colonized culture, i.e. the historical correspondence between thought and change witnessed in the age of Enlightenment in the West would not obtain in the colonized East, we would still have to answer the question, 'What are the specific relations between thought and change which do obtain in those countries?'

Unlike the sociological determinist who is satisfied with the supposedly empirical 'fact' that all nationalist leaderships manage 'somehow or other' to transcend the problems of cross-cultural relativism inherent in the colonial situation, we will need to pose this as a matter of fundamental significance for an understanding, first, of the relationship between colonialism and nationalism, and second, of the specific structure of domination which is built under the aegis of the post-colonial national state.

The critique of the 1970s seriously damaged the old structure of assumptions about the Indian 'renaissance'. It emphasized at numerous points the impossibility of making the distinction between a progressive and a conservative trend within the 19th century intelligentsia. It showed, in fact, that on most fundamental questions virtually the whole intelligentsia shared the same presuppositions. But those presuppositions were neither unambiguously modern, nor unambiguously national. Liberal, secular and rational attitudes were invariably compromised by concessions to scriptural or canonical authority or, even more ignominiously, by succumbing to pressures for conformity or to enticements of individual material advancement. On the other hand, sentiments of nationality flowed out of an unconcealed faith in the basic goodness of the colonial order and the progressive support of the colonial state. All this reflected the absence of a fundamental social class infused by a revolutionary urge to transform society and to stamp it with the imprint of its own unquestioned hegemony. The Indian 'renaissance' had no historical links with the revolutionary mission of a progressive bourgeoisie seeking to create a nation in its own image.

Interestingly, however, even in their critique of the 'renaissance' argument, the historians of the 1970s did not relinquish the analogy with European history as their basic structure of reference. Indeed, the critique was possible only by reference to that analogue. The point of the critique was, in fact, to show that if modern Europe is taken as the classic example of the progressive significance of an intellectual revolution in the history of the emergence of the capitalist economy and the modern state, then the intellectual history of 19th century India did not have this significance. As the harbinger of a bourgeois and a national revolution, the Indian 'renaissance' was partial, fragmented; indeed, it was a failure. Thus, what was meant to be modern became increasingly alienated from the mass of the people. What seemed to assert greater ideological sway over the nation were newer forms of conservatism. And yet those seemingly conservative movements in thought were themselves premised on the same presuppositions — 'modern' presuppositions — as those of the 'renaissance'.

VI

The Indian debate has brought up these questions within the ambit of Marxist theory, but more specifically within the relations between culture and politics suggested in the writings of Antonio Gramsci. In so doing, it has brought to the foreground of the discussion several problems with the conventional Marxist approach to the 'national and colonial question'. Recent European discussions on Gramsci have highlighted the importance of his ideas not merely in the context of revolutionary politics *in* Europe, but for problems such as the national and colonial questions or the nature of the post-colonial state in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Leonardo Paggi, for instance, has argued:

> If, beginning in 1924, Gramsci's position is characterised by an emphasis on the specificity of the Western European situation with regard to czarist Russia, his contribution cannot be reduced to the recognition of this specificity … The most favourable conditions do not always necessarily exist in those countries where the development of capitalism and industrialism has reached *the highest* level… To theorise this possibility was not merely a matter of claiming the existence of conditions favourable to a revolutionary development *even* in countries which have not yet reached capitalist maturity, but also, and more importantly, to have completely changed the analytical tools. It meant primarily the abandonment of the traditional interpretation of historical materialism which had shown itself inadequate not only in the East, but also in the West… In the East as well as the West, marxism had to reject the interpretative scheme based on the relation of cause and effect between structure and superstructure. It had to reintroduce the concept of the social relations of production in political science, according to Gramsci's analysis of power relations.[67]

It is Gramsci's conception of the state as 'coercion plus hegemony' and of the struggle for power as 'domination plus intellectual-moral leadership' which enabled the Indian critics to examine afresh the so-called 'renaissance' in 19th century India in terms of the aspirations of a new class to assert its intellectual-moral leadership over a modernizing Indian nation and to stake its claim to power in opposition to its colonial masters. But the examination also demonstrated how, under the specific conditions of the *economy and polity of a* colonial country, this domination necessarily rests on extremely fragile foundations and the intellectual-moral leadership of the dominant classes over the new nation remains fragmented.

Even more specifically, Gramsci's writings provide another line of enquiry which becomes useful in the understanding of such apparently deviant, but historically numerous, cases of the formation of capitalist nation-states. In his famous 'Notes on Italian History',[68] Gramsci outlines an argument about the 'passive revolution of capital'. Contrasting the history of the formation of the Italian state in the period of the Risorgimento with the classic political revolution in France in 1789, Gramsci says that the new claimants to power in Italy, lacking the social strength to launch a full-scale political assault on the old dominant classes, opted for a path in which the demands of a new society would

be 'satisfied by small doses, legally, in a reformist manner — in such a way that it was possible to preserve the political and economic position of the old feudal classes, to avoid agrarian reform, and, especially, to avoid the popular masses going through a period of political experience such as occurred in France in the years of Jacobinism, in 1831, and in 1848.'[69] Thus in situations where an emergent bourgeoisie lacks the social conditions for establishing complete hegemony over the new nation, it resorts to a 'passive revolution', by attempting a 'molecular transformation' of the old dominant classes into partners in a new historical bloc and only a partial appropriation of the popular masses, in order first to create a state as the necessary precondition for the establishment of capitalism as the dominant mode of production.

Gramsci's ideas provide only a general, and somewhat obscurely stated, formulation of this problem. To sharpen it, one must examine several historical cases of 'passive revolutions' in their economic, political and ideological aspects. On the face of it, the Indian case seems a particularly good example, but the examination of modern Indian history in terms of this problematic has only just begun. What I will outline here is an analytical framework in which the ideological history of the Indian state can be studied. The framework attempts to locate, within a historical context of 'passive revolution', the problem of the autonomy of nationalist discourse as a discourse of power..

Nationalist texts were addressed both to 'the people' who were said to constitute the nation and to the colonial masters whose claim to rule nationalism questioned. To both, nationalism sought to demonstrate the falsity of the colonial claim that the backward peoples were culturally incapable of ruling themselves in the conditions of the modern world. Nationalism denied the alleged inferiority of the colonized people; it also asserted that a backward nation could 'modernize' itself while retaining its cultural identity. It thus produced a discourse in which, even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of 'modernity' on which colonial domination was based. How are we to sort out these contradictory elements in nationalist discourse?

Notes

1. John Plamenatz, 'Two Types of Nationalism' in Eugene Kamenka, ed., *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), pp.23-36.

2. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* {New York: Macmillan, 1944); *The Age of Nationalism* (New York: Harper, 1962); *Nationalism, Its Meaning and History* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1955).

3. For a discussion of this distinction in Kohn, see Aira Kemiläinen, *Nationalism* (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä: Kasvatusopillinen Korkeakoulu, 1964), pp.H5ff.

4. See Ken Wolf, 'Hans Kohn's Liberal Nationalism: The Historian as Prophet', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 37, 4 (October-December 1976), pp.651-72. Carlton Hayes, the American historian of nationalism, proposed a theory of the 'degeneration' of nationalism from a liberal, humanitarian and peaceful form to a reactionary, egoistic and violent form. Carlton J.H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: R.R. Smith, 1931) and *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1960). More recently, Seton-Watson has written a comparative history of nationalist movements based on a distinction between 'old' and 'new' nations. 'The old are those which had acquired national identity or national consciousness before the formulation of the doctrine of nationalism'. Such nations were the English, Scots, French, Dutch, Castilians, Portuguese, Danes, Swedes, Hungarians, Poles and Russians. 'The new are those for whom two processes developed simultaneously: the formation of national consciousness and the creation of nationalist movements. Both processes were the work of small educated political elites.' Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London: Methuen, 1977).

5. Thus for example, Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1966); or Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1971); or most recently, John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982).

6. Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), pp.147-78.

7. Thus, for example, David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1969).

8. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p.124.

9. Ibid., p.20.

10. Ibid., p.39.

11. IbjJ., p.48.

12. ttfid., p.57. Gellner's typology of nationalism, despite a rather elaborate attempt at model-building, coincides with the 'two types' of Plamenatz, with the addition of a third type, that of 'diaspora nationalism'.

13. Ibid., p. 120.

14. John Dunn is somewhat less gentle:

> if nationalism as a political force is in some ways a reactionary and irrationalist sentiment in the modern world, its insistence on the moral claims of the community upon its members and its emphasis that civic order and peace is not a force but an achievement which may well have to be struggled for again is in many ways a less superstitious political vision than the intuitive political consciousness of most capitalist democracies today.
>
> It is in this sense broadly true that the populations of most if not all capitalist democracies today espouse a relaxed and peaceful economic nationalism but shrink back rather from the stridencies and the violence of those whose nations still appear to them to require liberation, to be still *unfree.* And it is natural for them to see the former versions of nationalism as harmless and the latter as purely damaging, fit conduct for Palestinians. Yet both of these more or less reflex judgements are disastrously inadequate. The relaxed economic nationalism of operating states, although it is a natural outcome of the dynamics of the world economy, poses a real threat to the future of the species, while the terrorist politics of national liberation, unprepossessing though it certainly is in itself,

is premised upon very deep truths about the human political condition which it is wildly imprudent for us to ignore.

Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.71.

15. 'Introduction' in Elie Kedourie, ed., *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p.2.

16. Anthony Smith, *Theories of Nationalism,* pp.12-24.

17. Ibid., p.23.

18. Ibid., p.15.

19. *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1960), p.9.

20. *Nationalism in Asia and Africa,* p.29.

21. Ibid., p.36.

22. Ibid., p. 103.

23. Ibid., p.105.

24. Ibid., p.76.

25. Ibid., p. 106.

26. Ibid., p. 135.

27. Ibid., pp. 146-7.

28. A representative selection of the different arguments in this debate can be found in Bryan R. Wilson, ed., *Rationality* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970).

29. Martin Hollis, 'Reason and Ritual', *Philosophy,* 43 (1967), 165, pp.231-47.

30. Davidson's argument is that the idea that there can be two 'conceptual schemes', both largely true but not translatable from one to the other, rests on a holistic theory of meaning, viz., that to give the meaning of any sentence or word in a language we need to give the meaning of every sentence or word in that language. This is false. If so, then Davidson shows that there can be no intelligible basis for saying that another scheme is different from our own in the sense of being untranslatable. And if we cannot say schemes are different, neither can we intelligibly say they are the same. Hence, the only intelligible procedure would be to maintain that most of the beliefs in a scheme are true and that every other language is in principle translatable into our own. Donald Davidson, 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association,* 17 (1973-4), pp.5-20.

31. The 'principle of humanity' suggests that instead of attempting to maximize agreement, one should try to minimize disagreement, specifically in those cases in which we find the beliefs apparently unintelligible. Here the underlying assumption is that of the unity of human nature, from which basis it is argued that, except for a small number of bizarre cases, it should be possible to explain most cross-cultural differences in beliefs or actions in terms of the varying circumstances in which other peoples live. That is to say, one assumes a certain universal instrumental rationality for all human beings and then asks: are the particular beliefs according to which a particular group of people act in a certain way in order to achieve certain outcomes rational *within* their specific social circumstances? If so, then their beliefs and behaviour would become intelligible to us. We would then in effect be saying that had we been placed in exactly the same circumstances, we would have held the same beliefs.

32. Consider for instance, the following exchange:

> *Alasdair Maclntyre:...* at any. given date in any given society the criteria in current use by religious believers or by scientists will differ from what they are at other times and places. Criteria have a history ... It seems to me that one could only hold the belief of the Azande rationally *in the absence* of any practice of science and technology in which criteria of effectiveness, ineffectiveness and kindred notions have been built up. But to say this is to recognize the appropriateness of scientific criteria of judgment from our standpoint. The Azande do not intend their belief either as a piece of science or as a piece of non-science. They do not possess those categories. It is only *post eventum,* in the light of later and more sophisticated understanding, that their belief and concepts can]}«» classified and evaluated at all.
>
> This suggests strongly that beliefs and concepts are not merely to be evaluated by the criteria implicit in the practice of those who hold and use them.

Alasdair Maclntyre, 'Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing?' in Wilson, *ed., Rationality,* pp.62-77.

> *Peter Winch:...* far from overcoming relativism, as he claims, Maclntyre himself falls into an extreme form of it. He disguises this from himself by committing the very error of which, wrongly as I have tried to show, he accuses me: the error of overlooking the fact that 'criteria and concepts have a history'. While he emphasizes this point when he is dealing with the concepts and criteria governing action in particular social contexts, he forgets it when he comes to talk of the criticism of such criteria. Do not the criteria appealed to in the criticism of existing institutions equally have a history? Maclntyre's implicit answer is that it is in ours; but if we are to speak of difficulties and incoherencies appearing and being detected in the way certain practices have hitherto been carried on in a society, surely this can only be understood in connection with problems arising *in* the carrying on of that activity. Outside that context we could not begin to grasp what was problematical... Maclntyre criticizes, justly, Sir James Frazer for having imposed the image of his own culture on more primitive ones; but that is exactly what Maclntyre himself is doing here. It is extremely difficult for a sophisticated society to grasp a very simple and primitive form of life: in a way he must jettison his sophistication, a process which is itself perhaps the ultimate sophistication. Or, rather, the distinction between sophistication and simplicity becomes unhelpful at this point.

Peter Winch, 'Understanding a Primitive Society', *American Philosophical Quarterly,* 1 (1964), pp.307-24.

33.

> Nationalism is the starkest political shame of the twentieth century ... The degree to which its prevalence is still felt as a scandal is itself a mark of the unexpectedness of this predominance, of the sharpness of the check which it has administered to Europe's admiring Enlightenment vision of the Cunning of Reason. In nationalism at last, or so it at present seems, the Cunning of Reason has more than met its match.

John Dunn, *Western Political Theory,* p.55.

34. There exists a set of notebooks by Marx, which Engels called the 'Chronological Notes', containing Marx's researches in the years 1881-2 into the history of the emergence of the bourgeoisie, the formation of nation-states and peasant rebellions in Europe in the period of transition. There has been little discussion on these notes. The only account I know is in Boris Porshnev, 'Historical Interest of Marx in his Last Years of Life: The Chronological Notes' in

E.A. Zeluvoskaya, L.I. Golman, V.M. Dalin and B.R. Porshnev, eds., *Marks Istorik* (Moscow: Academy of Sciences, 1968), pp.4O4-32. A Bengali translation of this article is available in *Baromas,* 7, 1 (Autumn 1985), pp.1-12.

35. For a short review, see Michael Löwy, 'Marxists and the National Question', *New Left Review,* 96 (March-April 1976), pp.81-100. Also see the remarkable note by Roman Rosdolsky, 'Worker and Fatherland: A Note on a Passage in the *Communist Manifesto', Science and Society,* 29 (1965), pp.330-7.

36. See in particular, V.I. Lenin, 'Critical Remarks on the National Question', *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), vol.20, pp. 17-54; 'The Right of Nations to Self-determination', *Collected Works,* vol.20, pp.393-454; 'The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-determination', *Collected Works,* vol.22, pp. 143-56; 'The Discussion on Self-determination Summed Up', *Collected Works,* vol.22, pp.320-60.

37. *Toward a Marxist Theory of Nationalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

38. Ibid., p.29.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p.24.

41. Ibid., p.25.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p.31.

44. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

45. J.V. Stalin, 'Marxism and the National Question', *Works,* vol.2 (Calcutta: Gana-Sahitya Prakash, 1974), pp. 194-215. Stalin's definition runs as follows:

> A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture ... none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation.

46. *Imagined Communities,* p. 15.

47. Ibid., p.28.

48. Ibid., p.46.

49. Ibid., pp.78-9.

50. Ibid., p.105.

51. Ibid., p.107.

52. Ibid., p.123.

53. Ibid., p. 146.

54. Karl Marx, 'The British Rule in India' in K. Marx and F. Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence 1857-1859* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), p.20.

55. See, for instance, R.P. Dutt, *India Today* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1949); S.C. Sarkar, *Bengal Renaissance and Other Essays* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1970); A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1948); Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1966); Arabinda Poddar, *Renaissance in Bengal: Search for Identity* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977).

56. V.C. Joshi, ed., *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1975).

57. Sumit Sarkar, 'Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past', ibid., pp.46-68.

58. Similar arguments were put forward in three other articles in the same volume: Asok Sen, 'The Bengal Economy and Rammohun Roy'; Barun De, 'A Biographical Perspective on the Political and Economic Ideas of Rammohun Roy'; and Pradyumna Bhattacharya, 'Rammohun Roy and Bengali Prose'; and in Sumit Sarkar, 'The Complexities of Young Bengal', *Nineteenth Century Studies,* 4 (1973), pp.504-34; Barun De, 'A Historiographical Critique of Renaissance Analogues for Nineteenth-Century India' in Barun De, ed., *Perspectives in the Social Sciences I: Historical Dimensions* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 178-218.

59. *Asck^Sen^j[sMajLj^M&adra^yjdyasa£ar, And his Elusive Milestones* (Calcutta: Riddhi-India, 1977).

ou. iDia., p.75

61. Ibid., p.86.

62. Ibid., pp.152, 155-6.

63. Ibid., pp. 106-7.

64. Ibid., p. 157.

65. Ibid., p.xiii.

66. Ranajit Guha, 'Neel Darpan: The Image of the Peasant Revolt in a Liberal Mirror', *Journal of Peasant Studies, 2,* 1 (October 1974), pp.1-46.

67. Leonardo Paggi, 'Gramsci's General Theory of Marxism' in Chantal Mouffe, ed., *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp.113-67.

68. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* tr. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp.44-120.

69. Ibid., p. 119.